



# Info@starklawlibrary.org

Stark County Law Library Association

May 2002

## BEGINNERS

## Weblogs, aka Blogs

**The email address, info@starklawlibrary.org really works! TRY IT!!**



What is a Weblog?  
Whatis?.com offers the most complete definition:

"... a blog, a short form of *Web log* or *weblog*, is a personal journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or the Web site and its purpose. Topics sometimes include brief philosophical musings, commentary on Internet and other social issues, and links to other sites the author favors. The essential characteristics of the blog are its journal form, typically a new entry each day, and its informal style."<sup>1</sup>

A few good articles for further information on blogs are:

- Rick Klau writes about blogging... and the practice of law in his current NOTHING.BUT.NET column at: <[http://www.abanet.org/lpm/magarticle2002\\_v28n3\\_p8.shtml](http://www.abanet.org/lpm/magarticle2002_v28n3_p8.shtml)>
- Denise Howell's "Law Meets Blog: Electronic Publishing Comes Of Age" at: <<http://www.llrx.com/features/lawblog.htm>>
- Dennis Kennedy's "Law Firms Play Catch-Up: Key Legal Technology Trends for 2002" at: <<http://www.llrx.com/features/techtrends2002.htm>>
- "WEB LOGS - BLOGS" at the

Computer Research & Technology site at: <<http://www.crt.net.au/etopics/blogs.htm>>

- "Weblogs and the News" at: <<http://www.well.com/user/jd/weblog/roundup.html>>
- Cindy Curling's "A Closer Look at Weblogs" at: <<http://www.llrx.com/columns/notes46.htm>>
- "History of Weblogs" at: <<http://newhome.weblogs.com/historyOfWeblogs>>

As mentioned in its definition, a blog can be many things to different people or groups, and they are definitely flourishing. During the month of January some 41,000 blogs were created using Blogger, just one of several weblog publishers.<sup>2</sup>

"... weblogs are ultimately democratic, often as timely as traditional news sources, and have a potential distribution much greater than print media."<sup>3</sup>

Newspapers are beginning to incorporate Weblogs into their sites. For example, columnist Jessica Smith of the Observer-Reporter has invited the newspaper's readers to suggest links for "Off the Record," a general interest Weblog.<sup>4</sup> LLRX.com has even taken a look at blogs as a possible enhancement for law firms saying:

**"Blogs are often the source of a wealth of useful information on news, technology, politics, as well as just plain weird and extraneous but nevertheless interesting facts on just about anything."<sup>5</sup>**

Continued on page 2

## BEGINNERS

## Blogs (Continued)

Continued from page 1

“Blogs are a true web phenomenon and may have application in both internal knowledge management and external communication to clients and others.”<sup>6</sup>

Blogs of interest for lawyers include:

- LLRX.com Newstand at: <<http://www.llrx.com/newstand/>> the latest news on legal-tech issues, legislation, web resources and services, online research and more by Sabrina I. Pacifici
- Ernie the Attorney at: <<http://radio.weblogs.com/0104634/2002/03/29.html>> links to 10 other law blogs. While you are
- there, check out Jacob Stein's “The Gentle Art of Confessing Error.” This site is definitely worth a look!
- Big Blog <[http://www.bigblog.com/online\\_legal\\_issues.html](http://www.bigblog.com/online_legal_issues.html)> contains sections on “Online Legal Issues” and “IP & Patents.”
- Trial.com at: <<http://www.trial.com/Blogger/Trial-Blog.htm>> offers news and views of interest in the legal market, with a focus on litigation and related management topics.
- Law Blog at: <<http://www.lawblog.com/>> is interesting, but not as useful as the others.

Special points of interest:

Teoma uses three methods of returning sites:

- On the left side of the screen are the usual result pages, they called “relevant web pages.”
- On the right is **Refine**, a list of “suggestions to narrow your search,”
- Also on the right are, **Resources**, which are “link collections from experts and enthusiasts.”

## INTERMEDIATE

## Teoma (The Google Companion)

Teoma.com (pronounced tee-O-ma) which is Gaelic for “expert” is attempting to mount a serious challenge to Google.

But it won't be easy to topple Google, which processes more than 150 million search queries a day and indexes 3 billion Web documents, compared with 200 million for Teoma.<sup>7</sup>

Teoma uses three methods of returning sites. On the left side of the screen are the usual result pages, which they call “relevant web pages.” On the right are two other kinds of results:

- Refine, a list of “suggestions to narrow your search,” and
- Resources, which are “link collections from experts and enthusiasts.”<sup>8</sup>

Each set of results is useful, in different situations, and all three types of results are generated using proprietary technology that makes them somewhat unique compared to other engines. Paul Gardi, a vice president of AskJeeves, the search company that bought Teoma last year, said that it “looks first for clusters of Web pages that are focused on a particular topic. It then analyzes the links to figure out which Web pages are held in high esteem by members of specific interest groups.”<sup>9</sup> Alexa McCann, a spokeswoman for AskJeeves, described it this way:

Continued on Page 3

**If you watch  
for the timeliness  
of its results and  
don't mind  
wading through  
some junk  
results,  
you have a  
GOOD  
companion for  
Google!**



## INTERMEDIATE

## Teoma (Continued)

Continued from page 2

"If you were on the Web and had a question about your baby, are you going to ask all your friends or only your friends who are parents themselves? Teoma is allowing you to get your advice from people or sites that have a level of authority to answer what you are asking about."<sup>10</sup>

All this sounds great, but while researching blogs for this month's Beginner Section, entering "blog +law" produced a few legal blogs and a lot of junk. The "Refine" and "Resources" sections of the engine produced similar results - some very good information and some rather bizarre junk!<sup>11</sup>

Entering "legal blog" as a keyword search returned eight results in foreign languages, then the very well-respected law blog "Law Library Resource Xchange" (LLRX.com).

But the weirdest result came when "terrorist" was entered and in the list of results was the American Red Cross website!

Teoma does shine in one respect. Teoma is VERY good when you want to broaden your results to include smaller, lesser known, but sometimes very authoritative sites. For example, a search on Osama bin Laden at Google listed fairly narrow stories from well-known information sources such as CNN, PBS and BBC, while Teoma found high-quality articles -- many broader in scope -- from resources most people wouldn't have heard of. But be sure to check for timeliness when using Teoma! Only three of the ten results from the bin Laden search were dated from 9/11 to date, the rest went back to February 1998! And a search on itself (Teoma) led to nothing newer than January, 2002, with most of the results coming from last summer!

If you watch for the timeliness of its results and don't mind wading through some junk results, you have a GOOD companion for Google!

**Searching and  
navigating the  
Web are NOT the  
same thing!**

## ADVANCED

## Searching & Navigating

"Searching & Navigating Via Internet Explorer" by Danny Sullivan of Search Engine Watch fame offers an excellent article at: <<http://searchenginewatch.com/sereport/02/04-ie.html>> that explains the difference between *searching* the Web and *navigating* it. It also outlines the ways you can search using Internet Explorer, or use it to locate specific parts of a document.

Searching and navigating the Web are NOT the same thing!

When a person has no predetermined destination in mind, he is searching the Web for his information and usually types search terms into a search engine. But when a person DOES know where he wants to go, he navigates the Web by typing his destination into his browser's address bar.

Continued on page 4

## Advanced Searching &amp; Navigating (Continued)

Continued from page 3

Although searchers and navigators are coming from different mind sets, they may choose a good search engine to handle both search and navigational requests. In fact, one of the reasons that Google is so popular is that it helps its users navigate the Web by suggesting the right site high on their results list when you can't recall how to get to the site directly.

Just as Google can perform both actions, so can Internet Explorer. Old browsers used the Internet's DNS or "domain name system" to direct the browser to the website entered in its address bar. Internet Explorer also uses DNS but it performs other checks as well to try to understand an incorrect

address such as <amazonbooks.com>. According to Danny Sullivan's article you *should* get a message that the site couldn't be found plus information to help find the correct site. IE should also suggest sites with similar names. It didn't work for me, when I typed <amazonbooks.com>, I faced a blank screen! And when I clicked on "Tools" and went to "Show Related Links" Alexa offered me the Barnes and Noble's website instead. (I'm sure Amazon would LOVE that!)

If you are running IE6 on Windows XP you can also use the new "Search Companion." Read Sullivan's article for more information on this topic. It is located on the Web at <<http://searchenginewatch.com/sereport/02/04-ie.html>>.

## FOOTNOTES

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- <sup>3</sup> [Blogdex](http://blogdex.media.mit.edu/info.asp) mit media laboratory. 9 April 2002. <<http://blogdex.media.mit.edu/info.asp>>
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